

## Message Text

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PAGE 01     PRETOR 04963 241553Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 /089 W

-----096721 241743Z /64

P R 241515Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2264

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMCONSUL DURBAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4963

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL WALLS

1. GRAHAM AND I CALLED ON COMBINED OPERATIONS CHIEF PETER WALLS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 23. THE CONVERSATION WAS RELAXED AND FRIENDLY. HE COMPLIMENTED US ON BEING ABLE TO STAY OUT OF THE NEWSPAPERS AND CONTINUE OUR QUIET DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARTIES.

2. MOST OF THE CONVERSATION RELATED TO THE ALL-PARTIES MEETING. HE MADE QUITE CLEAR HIS SUPPORT FOR SUCH A MEETING AND THE URGENCY WHICH HE ATTACHED TO ITS BEING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02     PRETOR 04963 241553Z

CONVENED AT AN EARLY DATE. HE IS SKEPTICAL THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO PRODUCE A SETTLEMENT BUT HE FEELS THAT RHODESIA IS IN AN UNTENABLE POSITION AS THE PARTY HOLDING OUT AGAINST SUCH A MEETING. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION, WE REASSURED HIM THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MAINTAINED ITS POSITION IN SUPPORT OF A CONFERENCE. WE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT AND THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO

ATTEND MIGHT NOT CONTINUE VERY LONG. WE NOTED TO HIM, AS WE HAD TO OTHERS, THAT THERE WAS AN ADVANTAGE FROM THE REGIME'S POINT OF VIEW TO ATTENDING A CONFERENCE WHILE ZAMBIA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS STILL VERY MUCH AT ISSUE. ONCE THAT HAD BEEN SETTLED AND KAUNDA RETURNED, PRESSURES ON NKOMO TO REACH A SETTLEMENT MIGHT NOT BE AS GREAT. WALLS ACKNOWLEDGED THIS ARGUMENT.

3. WE REVIEWED WITH WALLS IN SOME DETAIL AS WE HAD WITH OTHERS THE ISSUES ON WHICH WE FELT THERE MUST BE SOME MOVEMENT FROM THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT IF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND EXPLAINED THAT WE THOUGHT FRONT LINE SUPPORT FOR A MODERATE POSITION FROM THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON WHETHER OR NOT SMITH WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT SUCH MOVEMENT. IT WAS WALLS' VIEW THAT HAD THE REGIME MOVED VIGOROUSLY TO GET RID OF DISCRIMINATION AND SHOW ITS GOOD FAITH IN THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT IN ITS FIRST DAYS, THE SITUATION MIGHT BE MUCH BETTER TODAY. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT FURTHER MOVEMENT WOULD BE NECESSARY AND THAT IT WAS BETTER TO MAKE IT NOW IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT, THAN A FEW MONTHS HENCE.

4. WALLS SAID THAT THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAD SEEN A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE CEASEFIRE PROGRAM. THIS FOLLOWED FROM THE MSANA TELEVISION BROADCAST. A NUMBER OF GUERRILLAS HAD INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ENTER INTO THE SAME KIND OF

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03     PRETOR 04963 241553Z

ARRANGEMENT IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

5. WALLS WENT TO SOME LENGTH TO DENY A REPORT HE HAD HEARD FROM A UN OFFICIAL THAT MANY PEOPLE WERE WORRIED THAT ONCE INDEPENDENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION WERE ACHIEVED, THE SECURITY FORCES WOULD STAGE A COUP AND REINSTALL THE SMITH GOVERNMENT IN A SECOND UDI. HE SAID THIS IDEA WAS UTTERLY UNTHINKABLE TO HIMSELF OR ANY OTHER OFFICER UNDER HIS COMMAND.

6. WALLS QUESTIONED US CLOSELY ABOUT THE RECENT NEWS OF UNIFICATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WITH MUGABE TO TAKE THE NUMBER TWO POSITION. HE SAID HE DOUBTED THAT THE ZANLA AND ZIPRA UNITS ACTING IN THE COUNTRY-OF WHICH HE ESTIMATED THERE WERE ABOUT 8,000 AT PRESENT-WOULD CEASE THEIR RIVALRY VERY EASILY. WE SAID WE SAW THE SIGNIFICANCE LARGELY IN THE POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF THE TWO PARTIES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT FOR AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING. SUBORDINATION OF MUGABE WOULD ENABLE MANY PEOPLE TO ACCEPT AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE PF WHO MIGHT HAVE OTHERWISE OPPOSED IT. MILITARY INTEGRATION AND TRUST BETWEEN THE TWO ARMIES WOULD OBVIOUSLY TAKE MORE TIME.

EDMONDSON

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